CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	**Front Range Pipeline Buffalo Lateral Project**
Proposed Implementation Date:	June, July 2013
Proponent:	CHS, LLC and Front Range Pipeline, LLC
Location:	Section 12, & 23 - Township12N, Range 15E
County:	Fergus and Judith Basin Counties
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent is requesting permission to install a 16" Diameter Pipeline underground on the below described tracts of State Land. The proponent has submitted two applications for 30' wide Right-of-Way easements for the installation and maintenance of a 16" Diameter Transmission Pipeline on State Land as described below:

Section 23, Township12N, Range 15E - SW4, SE4, NE4 – Judith Basin County – 4.39 acres m/l
Section 12, Township12N, Range 15E - SE4, NE4 – Fergus County – 1.83 acres m/l

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Northeastern Land Office (NELO), Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Trust Land Division (TLMD), and the State surface lessee have all been informed of the proposed project. Stahly Engineering, CHS, LLC and Front Range Pipeline, LLC are also involved in the project.

Surface Leasee
B & H Ranch Co. James Peterson - President

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The proponent is responsible for contacting BNSF Railroad before installation of the pipeline begins.

The DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not issue a permit to install an underground 16" Diameter Pipeline on State Land.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does issue a permit to install an underground 16" Diameter Pipeline on State Land.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:
Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

There are no unusual geologic features in the proposed project area.

Reclamation and reseeding on disturbed areas is the responsibility of the proponent.

No cumulative effects to the soils are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

There are no important surface or groundwater resources within the proposed project area.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Plant communities in the proposed right of way will be destroyed. The proponent will be responsible for reclaiming and reseeding the disturbed areas.

The proponent will be responsible for weed control and coordinate weed control measures with the surface lessee. The proponent is also responsible for any damages(if any) to the surface lessee's hay crop.

No rare plants or cover types are present.

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposed action will not have long-term negative effect on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

At this time, no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources have been identified within the proposed project area.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (attached) identified one bird species on the Species of Special Concern Report. Ferruginous Hawks (*Buteo regalis*) may be found in the proposed project area.

A review of the 2012 Sage-grouse lek and lek area data in NRIS/ArcGis showed no sage grouse leks in or near the proposed project area.

There are no surface water areas included in the proposed project area. No negative impacts to fish are anticipated.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Cultural Resources Inventory was compiled by Aaberg Cultural Resource Consulting Service (on file) in May of 2013.

This report finds that installation of the proposed pipeline will not affect the Harvey Homestead or the BNSF Railroad grade.

A field inspection was conducted on July 1, 2013. No other significant historical, archeological, or paleontological resources were identified.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The state land does not provide any unique scenic qualities not also provided on adjacent private lands. The proposed activity will be conducted in a remote area, so there would be no change to the aesthetics in either alternative.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

There will be some health and safety concerns associated with the operation of heavy equipment in remote areas. The proponent and their employees are aware of any health and safety hazards and accept them as occupational hazards.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in this area.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed activity will create a limited number of jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No new jobs will be created.

No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting these lands.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The ROW Application fees ($50.00 x 2) and the Easement fees to be determined by DNRC will return revenue to the Common Schools Trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Bill Creamer
	Title:	Land Use Specialist
Signature:	/S/ Bill Creamer	**Date**: 7/2/2013

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the Proposed Alternative B, and recommend the proponent be issued the permit to install an underground 16” Diameter Pipeline on State Land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed project.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	**XXX**	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Barny D. Smith
	Title:	Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature: /S/ Barny D. Smith		**Date**: 7/2/2013